LOUISIANA Conservationist

99
La
333
L933
v.10 #1

January
1958

Louisiana CONSERVATIONIST

EARL K. LONG
Governor of Louisiana

F. L. CLEMENT
Director

Published Monthly except May, June, July and August when
Bi-Monthly in the interest of conservation by Louisiana
Wild Life and Fisheries Commission

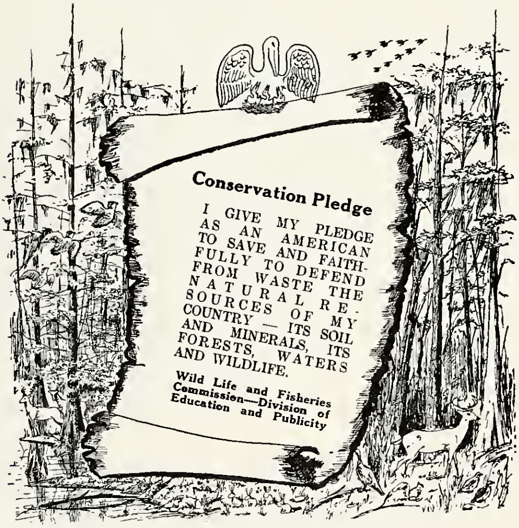
126 Civil Courts Building, New Orleans, La.

MEL WASHBURN, *Publisher*

STEVE HARMON, *Editor*

Vol. 10 January, 1958 No. 1

LOUISIANA STATE UNIVERSITY LIBRARY



Conservation Pledge

I GIVE MY PLEDGE AS AN AMERICAN TO SAVE AND FAITHFULLY TO DEFEND FROM WASTE THE NATURAL RESOURCES OF MY COUNTRY — ITS SOIL AND MINERALS, ITS FORESTS, WATERS AND WILDLIFE.

Wild Life and Fisheries Commission—Division of Education and Publicity

Entered as second class mail matter August 21, 1947, at the Post Office at New Orleans, La., under the act of August 24, 1912.

Member, Southwestern Association of Industrial Editors

Permission to reprint material in this publication will be granted provided that it is not used for advertising or commercial purposes and provided that proper credit is given. Contributions and photographs are welcomed, but the CONSERVATIONIST cannot be responsible for loss or damage to unsolicited material. Manuscripts should be addressed to Editor, Louisiana Conservationist, 126 Civil Courts Building, New Orleans 16, La.

LOUISIANA WILD LIFE AND FISHERIES COMMISSION

E. R. McDONALD, *Chairman*	*Newellton*
GEORGE A. FOSTER, *Vice-Chairman*	*Pollock*
POLYCARPE L. BROUSSARD	*Abbeville*
JOHN CUTRONE	*Morgan City*
RALIEGH J. PITRE	*Cut Off*
RAY WHATLEY	*Alexandria*

WARREN M. SIMON
Attorney

MEL WASHBURN
Chief, Education and Publicity

RUDOLPH EASTERLY
Chief, Law Enforcement

JOHN CAMPBELL
Chief, Fish and Game

JAMES N. McCONNELL
Chief, Oysters, Water Bottoms and Seafoods

RICHARD YANCEY
Chief, Refuge Division

TED O'NEIL
Chief, Fur Division

KENNETH E. BIGLANE
Chief, Water Pollution Control

FEDERAL AID SECTION

JOHN NEWSOM
Pittman-Robinson Coordinator

HARRY SCHAFER
Dingell-Johnson Coordinator

Vol. 10, No. 1

EDITORIAL

IN THIS ISSUE

* * *

FRESHWATER FISHING FUTURE
by *Harry Schafer* 2

"BEHOLD THE FISHERMAN"
by *Day C. Yeager* 5

THE CASE OF THE PELICAN LIMERICK
by *Rex Laney* 6

CHOKE TALK
by *Wallace Labisky* 8

CRABS AND CRABBING
by *Viosca and Waldo* 10

HUNTING SEASON SUCCESSFUL
by *W. C. Goins* 14

WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT STIRS BITTER BATTLES
by *Dion Henderson* 18

WILDLIFE STUDENTS ERECT ALUMINUM DUCK HOUSES 20

LOUISIANA WILDLIFE FEDERATION 24

* * *

COVER

Louisiana's official bird, the Brown Pelican.

PHOTO BY EDUARD MORGAN

By F. Lamar Clement, *Director*

Louisiana Wild Life and Fisheries Commission

GREAT STRESS is being laid by sincere conservationists in Louisiana relative to the protection and perpetuation of this state's great wealth in natural wildlife resources. Louisiana's timber, oil, gas, sulphur, wildlife and soil conservation are vital and well exploited ranks in this state's chain of fabulous riches and expansive programs are being used to acquaint the people of this state with the necessity for restoring and conserving this great wealth that has come too near to total dissipation. This is all a fine thing—commendable thing, but how many have taken stock of another fabulous resource that belongs to Louisiana—our commercial fisheries?

It is indeed time that everyone began seriously considering the future of all Louisiana fisheries and their value to the economic future of this state. How many Louisiana men and women have even the slightest knowledge of the magnitude of this state's fishery industry? Do you know that until the last couple of years the shrimp industry alone was worth virtually 30 million dollars a year in Louisiana, but has now dropped to an alarming figure? Did you know that this an industry in which more than 50 million dollars worth of equipment and materials is needed if it is to be carried on successfully? Did you know that about 110,000 persons will depend on Louisiana's fisheries for a livelihood, and that it employs approximately 30,000 individuals annually? These may seem fabulous figures, but they are true figures and they represent in statistics what the commercial fisheries indupstries mean to each of us in Louisiana's fiscal year.

F. LAMAR CLEMENT

Of course the next question is obvious. Is such an industry worthy of every phase of protection that we can offer?

The next time you are tempted to complain because the season has been closed on shrimping in order to permit unhampered spawning—the next time you hear complaints because certain oyster beds have been closed for a stipulated period to permit growth of the young oyster to commercial size—the next time you hear of certain coastal waters being closed to fish seining or trammel netting so that spawning fish may be protected, think of what could happen to our shrimp, our oysters and our commercial seafoods, if the 30,000 or more men who make a living taking them from our waters, were permitted to seine, trawl and dredge, unrestricted by regulations, unmindful of the damage they would do and heedless of the need for regard for the future. Just how long, under such conditions, do you think Louisiana could continue to have a multi-million dollar fisheries industry each succeeding year?

Figure four persons to each family: It has been estimated that there are 110,000 persons directly dependent on our fisheries industry for a livelihood, but that is only the forerank of the dependent list. What about the families of the men who provide the machinery, who build the boats, manufacture the ropes and twine, the coopers who make the barrels, the men and machinery needed to build the docks and the roads, the laborers and the ones who provide the vital and the thousand and one other things that are needed to keep this industry flourishing?

If you have read this far you must have come to the conclusion that no matter how rigid the restrictions must sometime be, they MUST be imposed. Are you still of a mind to sympathize with the selfish and greedy who would wreck such an industry in their grasp for a few more dollars that might be made by rank violation of conservation laws? If such an industry is to be perpetuated it must be protected, and it is a sad thing to comtemplate that it must be protected from the very ones who derive the most benefit from it. That is what makes the job of fisheries conservation such a thankless one. But when every man who makes a living (and some of them make fortunes) taking Louisiana's shrimp, fish, oysters, crabs, frogs and shells from our waters, realizes that this industry will continue and prosper only so long as it is protected from dissipation then, and only then, will we all be doing our full duty in conserving that which God has bestowed upon us so bountifully.

This seine is used here to block off a fish sampling area.

Freshwater Fishing Future

By Harry Schafer

THE MORE FISHERMEN who fish and buy fishing licenses the more fish there probably will be in our waters, biologists for the Freshwater Fisheries section of the Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries commission say. This seeming paradox was brought out recently in a report by the fisheries biologists who last year stocked the state's ponds and streams with more than two million fish.

"Fishing pressure is constantly increasing and improvements must be made if we are to have continued good fishing," the summary of activities for 1957 said. "The future of fishing is dependent upon the fish research that is being conducted. This research takes time and money and we enlist the help and cooperation of all citizens of the state in assisting in keeping Louisiana the best fishing area in the United States." the report states.

The Freshwater Fisheries Section is charged with fish research, lake management, and the rehabilitation of the fresh waters in Louisiana. The section consists of seven fishery biologists, two biologist aides, seine fishermen, laborers, and part time student help. Under the Dingell-Johnson Federal Aid Program, there are currently four research projects under way. The money for these projects is obtained by the federal government by collecting a manufacturer's excise tax on sport fishing tackle. The funds are apportioned to the states and matched in the ratio of seventy-five percent Federal and twenty-five percent State moneys. The apportionments to the states are based on the area of the state and the number of fishing licenses sold in the state. This means that the more fishing licenses that a state sells, the larger the federal apportionment will be. For this reason, many states are now requiring a fishing license for everyone who fishes.

The oldest Dingell-Johnson project in Louisiana is in its sixth year, which shows that fish research in Louisiana is in its infancy. This project was designed to gather information about fish populations in the state and to furnish information on how to manage the sport fisheries. Since this project is in its final stages, the field work has been cut down to a minimum and most of the time is spent placing the data collected during previous years on punch cards, analyzing these data, and writing completion reports. The field work included checking the angler's catch on Clear Lake near Rayville. This creel Census is important in forming a management program for a lake because it shows the number of people fishing and the number and kinds of fish being taken. Also in Clear Lake, the personnel of the project took minnow seine hauls in order to study the small fish population of the lake. Again, this information is needed in the formulation of a management program of the lake because it gives the biologist a picture of fish reproduction and its success.

Another Dingell-Johnson project is entitled "Fish Population in Aquatic

Fish Biologists and hatchery crews are shown here draining a pond at the Beechwood Fish Hatchery in Central Louisiana.

Conditions in Polluted Waters". The object of this project is to study fish populations and the fish foods in polluted waters. During this year, fish populations were taken from the Ouachita River and in lakes connected to this river. These samples were taken with hoop nets, trammel nets and gill nets. Fish taken in these samples were tagged and released so that their migration habits could be established and to see if the polluted areas formed a barrier to the migration of these fish. A number of fish were sacrificed in order that their stomachs could be analyzed for food contents in order to establish their main diets for the different times of the year. Closely related to this job was the taking of bottom fauna samples, which consists of collecting samples of mud from the bottom and then straining these samples. The organisms that live in and on the bottom are collected. Chemistry analyses were also conducted on the water of the rivers and lakes and samples of polluted water were taken to the laboratory and place in aquariums. Fish were placed in this polluted water so that the toxicity of the various pollutents could be determined. Fish taken from polluted areas were cooked and were presented to a taste panel who tried to determine if the polluted environment produced any change in the taste of the fish.

Loading crews get ready to fill the huge fish rescue truck with bass and sac-a-lait that some stream in Louisiana will get.

The third Dingell-Johnson project is entitled "The Evaluation of Commercial Gear." The object of this project is to test the effectiveness of different types of nets on predatory, forage and commercial fishes with reference to the harmful effects these nets may have on sport fishes. All types of waters were fished during the year and they included impoundments, ox bow lakes, material lakes, rivers and bayous. One inch wire mesh traps were fished for one hundred and eighteen trap days, a trap day being one trap being fished for a twenty-four hour period. Hoop nets that were made of cotton, nylon and linen. The mesh sizes were fished one inch, one and one-half inch, two and two and one-half inch. These hoop nets were fished 3,629 net days a net day being a hoop net fished for twenty-four hours. Gill nets were fished for 1,568 net days, a net day in this case being a net one-hundred yards long and eight feet deep fished for a twenty-four hour period. The mesh sizes for the gill nets included one inch, one and one-half inch, two inch, three inch, four inch, and four and one-half inch. The materials used in these nets were cotton, linen and nylon consisting of various twine sizes. One and two inch trammel nets were fished during this period for a total of 696 days. Various materials and twine sizes made up these trammel nets. It is expected that this project will terminate in September, 1958, and that the information obtained through this study will be valuable in setting up commercial fishing regulations.

A new Dingell-Johnson project set up during the middle of the year is entitled "Ecological Survey of Factors Affecting Fish Produced in Louisiana Waters." The object of this research project is to establish quantitatively just what habitats

Biologist lowers the Petersen dredge to the bottom of the lake to take samples of mud.

Here the Biologist strains the mud from the bottom of the lake to collect the organisms that are used for fish food.

This largemouth bass is being tagged by a fishery biologist at the Beechwood hatchery before delivery to one of Louisiana's many ponds and streams.

Louisiana Wild Life and Fisheries commission personnel doing fish rescue work in one of the many barrow pits alongside the Mississippi.

rich, average, or poor in production of fish food organisms and to determine the water qualities that produce each food organism quantity. Since the funds were limited, only four lakes were set up to be studied. At this time, they are Chicot Lake, Caddo Lake, Cane River Lake, and Lake Providence. During this year six plankton samples were taken. A plankton sample is taken by the use of a very fine mesh silk net that strains the microscopic organisms from the water. These organisms are used by the young fish and some adult species as food. Two bottom fauna samples were taken during this period. These bottom samples were taken with a dredge that scoops up a known quantity of mud from the bottom of the lake. The mud is then strained and the organisms collected. These organisms are also used as fish food. The abundance of these two groups of organisms is important in the productivity of a lake. Water chemistries to determine the quality of the water are taken monthly.

The state project of lake management conducted fish population samples in the following lakes: Lower and Upper Caney Lakes, Lake Bruin, Mangram Pits, Amite Pits, Upper and Lower Cane River Lakes, Phillips Bayou, Chatham Lake, Black Bayou Lake, Caddo Lake, and Iatt Lake. Fish samples of water and then rotenone is applied within the enclosed area. The fish that are killed are picked up, identified, weighed, and scale samples taken from each fish. It is important to know what fish are present in a body of water before any management program can be drawn up.

A striped bass study in the streams of the Florida parish waters was conducted for two months with hoop nets and gill nets in order to establish the migration of the striped bass. This is the salt water bass that moves into the fresh water streams during the spring of the year. Several years ago this species produced good fishing for many anglers. However, the population has been diminishing yearly and has reached such a low that during the migration last year only three fish were caught. The object of this study is to ascertain the reason for this population reduction.

A body of water, like a a piece of land, can only produce a given amount. If a pasture can only produce food to support ten animals, the owner could keep ten cows or ten horses, or a combination of horses and cows that totals ten animals. This is the same in a body of water. If it produces a hundred pounds of fish per acre, these fish could be all game fish or could be fifty pounds of game fish plus fifty pounds trash fish. When a body of water contains a large percentage of trash fish, it is usually said to be out of balance. Several of the lakes in the state are in this condition. During the past year, three bodies of water have been treated to correct this situation. This type of management is known as selective poisoning and consists of applying a light dose of rotenone which kills only the trash fish. Audubon Park in New Orleans was treated and over one-thousand, two hundred pounds of gizzard shads were removed. Bayou DeSiard in Monroe was also treated with a light dose of rotenone. The Monroe project was unique in that the money for the rotenone was gotten from the public sending in contributions. Two thousand dollars worth of rotenone was purchased and applied to the eight-hundred and eleven acre lake, resulting in the removal of over fifty-two tons of shad. These shad were buried in the city dump and will be used next year as fertilizer in the city park gardens. The job was considered very successful as only two shad were caught in a period of two weeks of fishing with over a thousand yards of gill and trammel nets. There have been many people catching their limit of bass, bream, and crappie. Cane River Lake was selectively poisoned during the fall of the year with a good kill of threadfin shad. The Natchitoches Police Jury supplied half the funds for the purchase of rotenone to do this job.

The farm pond management program was started so that the many thousands of acres of water could be utilized to their fullest extent. Upon application of the owner to the Louisiana Wild Life and Fisheries Commission, a biologist makes a survey of the pond and then from the results of the survey he makes recommendations to manage the pond. No pond is stocked without first being checked by the biologist to ascertain if the pond needs the fish. During the past year, one hundred and thirty-five ponds were checked. Ten permits were issued owners for the use of rotenone on their private ponds. This permit is necessary before rotenone or any fish killing chemical can be applied to ponds. The three state fish hatcheries located at Lacombe, Forest Hill and Monroe during 1957 produced over eight-hundred thousand blue gill bass, one hundred and seventy-five thousand large mouthed bass and one hundred and five thousand crappie. The production was not up to full capacity as all these hatcheries are in need or renovation and the funds have not been available. The funds to make the necessary repairs during the next fiscal year again appear to be unavailable. Over one hundred thousand fish were rescued from lakes and pits that were drying up. Over two million fish were

(Continued on Page 23)

"Behold The Fisherman"

by Day C. Yeager

Sometime ago, a friend of mine returned from a vacation trip and presented me with a saw-toothed plaque inscribed with a burning tool, "Behold the Fisherman."

With a smile that suggested that perhaps he's been eating his frozen food without thawing, he laughingly—laughingly?—said, "I thought of you when I saw this."

I have therefore chosen a few words to express publicly and from my bottom, my opinion of him, his exponents and their saw-teeth.

Rather than wax your ears prosaic, I shall deal with only the last line of this alternating current doodling which reads, "Smelling of strong drink and the truth is not in him."

Now I ask you, "Do we smell of strong drink?" Absolutely not. It is common knowledge that most repellants have an odor that outshines booze and, we immediately eliminate all those who don't like swatting bugs; they smell of repellant.

"THE WAY YOU'RE DRESSED HOW DO YOU EXPECT TO ATTRACT ANY FISH ?"

Did you ever smell an old fisherman's pipe? One puff on his briar and a low pressure area has been created, causing all other odors to leave in a counter-clockwise direction.

If you have ever been fortunate enough to get down wind from an untidy creel, you have experienced an odor that is distinctive in itself. No strong drink can pervade the same space as used fish or overripe garden hackle. What a pair of sweaty boots leave in their wake has not been called the "enchanting moment" either.

Let us not then, dear friend, call a spade a damshovel. We smell not as accused but of wholesome things in nature. Take away our gasoline, bug juices, pipes and creels and you won't get a quiver from all your odorometers. Perhaps your king-size nose should be equipped with filters, you may be closer to the smell than we are.

Lest I be accused of dealing in generalities, let's look into the official files of the B.F.I., the Bureau of Fishing Information.

In the case of No. 465971, only the number has been changed to protect the innocent. No. 465971 was fishing the backwoods section one day when a stroke of bad luck caused him to fall on a slippery rock. His injuries consisted of bumped rump and a broken bottle of dry fly oil. Now the serious problem was naturally the replenishment of the precious liquid.

Glancing about, the poor fellow chanced to see smoke curling up through the pines and upon further investigation he found a small shack hidden therein. As he approached a shotgun with a voice inquired "What the censored do you want?"

"Do you have some gasoline or alcohol and a little parafin?" asked our friend.

"Yep," and the fisherman was in business.

The shotgun withdrew and a bottle appeared saying, "Two dollars, keep the bottle." So our friend heated the wax, poured in into the solution and went merrily on his way.

He noticed that his flies not only floated high and dry, but sometimes they would take off to hover and glide. This was very strange indeed but stranger still, the bottle of fly oil began to sizzle. Before he could escape, the thing blew up and everything went black. It was shortly thereafter that the poor fellow was found, reeking with alcohol and still unconscious.

Further investigation proved his story to be true, the drain was pulled in the little shack and the shotgun went to jail. Incidentally, the shotgun was not a fisherman, but had merely retired to the forest in order to carry on operations.

Case history No. 684110 proves interesting also. The defendant had been happily fishing through the ice for several hours, little suspecting that danger lurked nearby. As he stooped to tip down a tip-up, he was savagely bitten by the rare Frigid Ichthyosaurus snake.

The serpent, which was the only evidence in this case, escaped unharmed, leaving the fisherman with just one recourse. It was while he was recoursing at the nearest bar that he was charged with drinking while fishing. Circumstantially, he was guilty and would have been judged so were it not for the fact that several other fishermen were also bitten and reported in for treatment shortly thereafter. One of the men testified that he had broken off the ice snake's tail but upon placing it on the bar, it melted.

In all fairness, a comparison should be made with other sports and the relation to drinking habits. A fisherman of any degree usually looks forward to the end of his trip with anticipation of being wet in a localized area and having a hungry, if you'll pardon the expression, gut.

Where on the other hand does a golf game end? There are more shots sunk on the 19th hole than all others combined. What does a skier dream of as he slaloms his last slalom? What happens when everybody on a bowling team

(Continued on Page 22)

The Case of The Pelican Limerick

By Rex Laney

THE BROWN PELICAN (pelecanus occidentalis), aside from its ornithological virtues, has other distinctions, He's the official bird of Louisiana, gracing the state's great seal and flag.

Another of his cliam to fame—he's the subject of a limerick that for some 50 years has been kicking around in American legendry and folk poetry. And in that connection, he was also the cause of a controversy that raged for quite a while.

"A wonderful bird is the pelican!
His bill will hold more than his belican
He can take in his beak
Food enough for a week.
But I'm durned if I see how the helican."

That's the limerick, well known to millions of Americans. Not so well known perhaps, are some of the facts concerning the author and the origin of his poem. It was the matter of its authorship that set off the hassle and helped to make the pelican limerick world famous.

This writer, in an article a short while ago, quoted the first two lines of the limerick and erroneously stated that the poem was anonymous. This was not carelessly done; the library had been visited and two anthologies of American folk poetry checked. Both listed the "Pelican" as anonymous.

But my research had not gone far enough. Upon publication of the article, the anonymity of the Pelican was challenged. Further digging turned up another authority that credited it to one Jeff McLemore of Texas, and finally, Bartlett's Quotations, which (it later developed) correctly identified the author as Dixon Lanier Merritt of Lebanon, Tennessee.

Mr. Merritt, a retired newspaperman and professor of journalism to mention only two of his activities, is a gentleman and scholar of great accomplishment.

A note to Mr. Merritt, apologizing for the mistake and requesting further details, happily brought a long letter from him with a wealth of material on the Pelican and how it came to be. Also, it forever cleared the atmosphere on the authorship question.

Most of this material, in Mr. Merritt's own delightful words, follows:

"I wrote the Pelican limerick, but did not create the pelican legend. The thing had existed in some folk form from time immemorial. Of what that form was, I have no slightest idea,

and certainly never saw or heard of it until I wrote the limerick.

"I was associate editor of the Nashville Banner, writing editorials and a column called 'By-Paths.' Joseph R. Wilson, only brother of Woodrow, was city editor. One morning when I was trying to get my copy in shape, Joe came into my office chuckling over a letter. 'Dix,' he said, 'I've got something here for your column.'

"The letter was from a girl on vacation in Florida. She told about the pelicans, saying everything that I was to say in the limerick. It was not funny to me; to this day I have never seen much in it, though for nearly half a century it has been the thing on which my fame (or infamy) rests.

"But to get Joe out of my hair, I stuck a sheet of paper in the typewriter and dashed off the limerick. Joe read it over my shoulder and chuckled some more. Without ever touching it, I rolled the sheet out over back of the typewriter. There it stayed for perhaps a month.

"One day I went stale and couldn't turn out enough stuff for the column. I raked out the accumulation back of the typewriter, including the Pelican, which I threw in with the musings of a fictitious character whom I called the Philosopher of the Cedar Snags.

"First time I saw the thing copied was in Judd Mortimer Lewis' "Tampering With Trifles' column in the Houston Post. From there it went all over Texas and the Gulf Coast, sometimes credited to me, sometimes to nobody, sometimes to anybody. It was during its Texas run that it got attached to the name of McLemore.

"At almost the same time that it started in Texas, the thing broke out in Florida and South Georgia. It appeared in three Florida cities on the same day—in Jacksonville credited to me, in St. Petersburg credited to nobody, and in Miami to Willis D. Powell, whom I had known as an artist with the Atlanta Chamber of Commerce.

"It was rather widely credited to Powell over the area in which he was known. Powell disowned it, saying that his only connection with it was that he turned it over to a newspaper in Tampa—just because he thought it was funny, and with no claim of authorship.

"After all this happened, a fellow (better left unnamed) changed the first line to read "There's a bird in the zoo called the pelican," and sold it to the old LIFE. At about the same time, another fellow (also better left unnamed) made some similar change and submitted it to JUDGE.

"It happened that at the time I was a regular contributor (to JUDGE) and Jim Waldron, the editor, read my column regularly and knew of the Pelican. He—I like to think as much to serve the cause of truth as to show up his competitor LIFE—launched an investigation and announced that "the pelican limerick appeared in Dixon Merritt's column in the Nashville Banner 11 days before it was printed anywhere else in the world!'

"So try as I might to duck it, the thing was hung firmly around my neck, and for almost 50 years it has been there, like the albatross around the neck of Coleridge's old sailor.

"Meanwhile, the thing was being printed everywhere. Two years later Don Marquis's 'Sun Dials' in the N. Y. Evening Sun took it up, and kept his column running on it for a couple of months. He collected 120-odd variants, most of which were printed in his column. Some were bungling copies, some were imitations, some were parodies; but a good many were something else entirely—very genuine.

"Some of them were not in the limerick form at all. A number contained quaint turns of expression bound to go very far back—could not possibly be current expressions, could not possibly have been created since the time when I first printed the limerick.

"What is bound to have happened is that many of Don Marquis's correspondents, like Joe Wilson's gal down there in Florida in the first place, tapped a vein of folk lore somewhere.

"So after being ashamed of the Pelican for some time, I have now for a good many years been proud of it. I think I am probably the only man in the world who ever actually wrote a folk poem, though I had nothing to do with creating the folk lore out of which it came.

"Ashamed or proud though I may be, the thing is mine now—too deeply embedded in too many books ever to be shaken. The first notable one was the "Book of the Limerick," written 30 years ago by an Englishman whose name I cannot recall, and I have not the book at hand (somebody borrowed

(Continued on Page 22)

Dixon Lanier Merritt

CHOKE TALK

By Wallace Labisky

The clerk in the hardware store where I bought my first 12-gauge (ga.) double gun, many years ago, considered himself an authority on choke. He fished a dime from his pocket and tried it in the muzzle of each barrel. The right tube accepted the dime with space to spare, whereas the left proved to be considerably smaller. Therefore, this specialist assured me, the gun would deliver modified and full-choke patterns. The barrels were so marked, of course, but he said he just wanted to make sure.

ON THE RIGHT TRACK

In one respect the clerk was on the right track. It is always worthwhile to find out how a scattergun is shooting, despite what is stamped on the barrel. But for this job the handy 10¢ piece is worthless. It is true that the procedure persists relative to 12-ga. guns, but it signifies nothing.

Fact is, shotgun performance (any gauge) simply cannot be reliably predicted by measuring the inside diameter of the barrel at the muzzle.

There are at least 2 good reasons why this is so. First, one arms manufacturer may place the greatest choke constriction right at the muzzle, whereas another may begin it an inch or more to the rear. Second, knowing the exact diameter of the choke is of absolutely no value unless the precise diameter of the bore is also known.

The one and only sure way of determining potential shotgun effectiveness, or deadliness, is by shooting test patterns on paper.

What is meant by "choke"?

Shotgun choke is a decrease in the diameter of the bore at or near the muzzle. This constriction is measured in thousandths of an inch, as is the size of the bore proper. If, for example, the tightest portion of the choke measures 20/1000″ less than the bore, the barrel is said to carry 20 points of choke.

There is an appreciable variation in bore size between shotguns of different makes. The 12-ga. bore, for example, is supposed to measure .729″. We may find, however, that one make is several thousandths undersize and that another is bored oversize.

The purpose of the choke is to control the spread of the shot charge, which grows progressively wider and more thinly distributed in flight. The rate at which the charge spreads, however, will vary according to the choke. At a given range, the charge from an improved-cylinder barrel will cover a greater area than that fired from a full-choke barrel; and with the same shot charge and shot size, the improved-cylinder pattern will be considerably less dense.

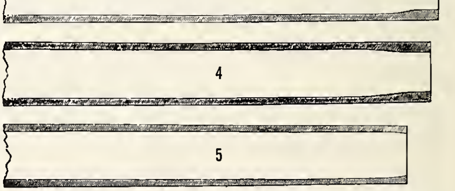
INFLUENCES ON PATTERN DIAMETER

Pattern *diameter* is not influenced by either gauge or barrel length, as many shooters erroneously believe. If a 12-ga. and a 20-ga. both deliver the same *percentage* of pellet hits inside a 30″ circle at 40 yds., there will be no appreciable difference between the width of the patterns at the same range. But because the 12-ga. handles a heavier charge of shot *its pattern will be denser and thus will kill at a longer range.* With respect to pattern density, what the full-choke (70%) 20-ga. with 1 oz. of No. 6 shot does at 40 yds., for instance, the full-choke 12-ga. with 1¼ ozs. of 6's will do at about 45 yds., and the 12's pattern will be approximately 8″ wider at the latter range.

The time-honored procedure of trying a dime in a 12-gauge gun muzzle does not provide any reliable information on shooting performance.

The barrel that averages at least 70% of the total shot charge inside a 30″ circle at 40 yds., is generally accepted as full choke. To my knowledge, no arms manufacturer will guarantee a higher percentage, though now and then a fixed-choke barrel will deliver 75% patterns. Such a barrel should rightfully be considered as extra-full choke. And once in a great while a barrel crops up that shoots 80% or better.

Opinions differ regarding the more open chokes, but a



1. Cylinder bore, no choke at all and the same inside diameter from end to end. 2. Recess choke, now used only to restore some choke to barrels from which it has been removed. 3. Choke with abrupt taper down to a parallel at the muzzle. 4. Choke with more gradual taper to the parallel. 5. Choke consisting of taper only, with no muzzle parallel at all.

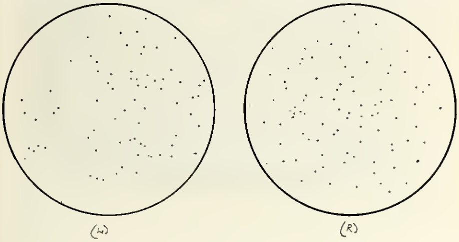
barrel that prints 60% is generally designated modified choke, and one shooting 50% is called improved-cylinder. Between these two, there is the quarter (1/4) choke which delivers 55% of the shot charge; and between the modified and full choke is the improved-modified (3/4) choke which gives a 65% count.

Before a shotgun leaves the manufacturer's hands, the barrel is stamped to indicate its choke constriction. But the buyer of an across-the-counter gun should not take it for granted that it will shoot as marked.

CHANGE INFLUENCES PATTERNS

Such a simple thing as using a different brand of ammunition can be responsible for a notable shift in patterns. Shotguns of pre-World War II vintage may deliver closer patterns with the improved shotshells on the market today. Barrels marked modified have been known to throw full-choke (70%) patterns, and those marked improved-cylinder have delivered modified (60%) and even full-choke patterns.

In some instances this situation may be reversed when high-velocity loads carrying heavy charges of large shot are fired in barrels marked full choke. As a rule, when this is the case, the pattern also lacks uniformity. The trouble can often be corrected by relieving the choke by a few thousandths.



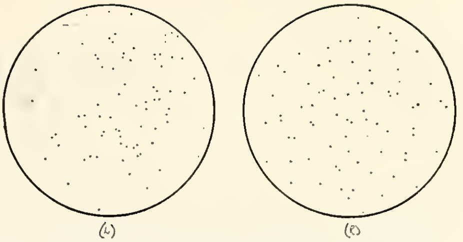
(l.) 72% 20-ga. pattern with 1 oz. of No. 6 shot at 40 yds. In the load, 223 pellets; in the 30″ circle, 160 pellets. (r.) 77% in the load, 279 pellets; in the 30″ circle, 215 pellets. While this 12-ga. pattern happened to have the higher percentage, the inherent advantage of the 12-ga. in number of pellets over the 20 is clearly seen. With centers that are a little more sense than the outer edges, these are what top-flight full-choke patterns should like like.

When the 2¾″ magnum loads became available in 1954, I was very anxious to try them in a 12-ga. auto-loader that I have been using for waterfowl shooting. With the old 1¼ oz. high-velocity load of No. 6 shot, the so-marked full-choke barrel had regularly shot 70%, but with 2's and 4's in the same load it gave much more open patterns. Naturally the higher pellet count of the 1½ oz. magnum boosted the density with 2's and 4's somewhat, but the percentages still figured out to only 55% or quarter choke, and to top it off the patterns were patchy. As a pass gun for either ducks or geese with the magnum shells, it was far from the best.

I measured that gun's choke at the point of greatest constriction and found it to be .684″. The diameter of the bore proper, according to a marking in millimeters on the underside of the barrel, was .717″ or .012″ undersize. Thus the choke constriction amounted to .33″.

Stating this information, I corresponded with several gunsmiths who specialized in working over poor-shooting shotgun barrels. The consensus was that pattern density with 2's and 4's in both the high-velocity and the magnum loads probably could be stepped up to 70% through simply relieving the choke, but should that not do the trick then the only alternative would be to over-bore the entire barrel.

Not feeling I could afford the cost of this work, I decided to try relieving the choke myself. Using a fine lapping compound, I alternately polished the choke and shot test patterns. After 3 sessions of lapping, the pattern density with the large shot increased to a 70% average, and pellet distribution was also greatly improved, so I terminated the alteration. Since then I have not had an opportunity to measure the choke constriction remaining, so I do not know exactly how much I removed. However, even though it was probably only a very slight amount it was enough to reduce density from 70% to 65% with the high-velocity load of 6's.



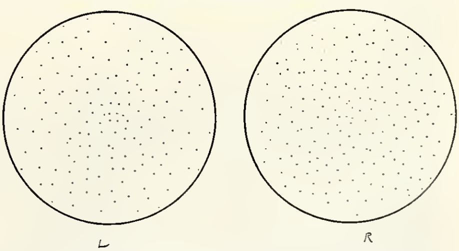
(l.) 55% 12-ga. pattern with 1½ ozs. of No. 2 shot at 40 yds. from a barrel marked full choke. In the standard magnum load, 13 2pellets; in the 30″ circle, 72 pellets. Note their uneven distribution. (r.) After the choke was relieved by a small amount through lapping, density climbed to 70% with the same load, and with a more uniform pattern. Pellet count in the 30″ circle, 92, representing a gain of 20.

VARIABLE CHOKES NOT "GUARANTEED"

As in the case of a fixed choke, there is no guarantee that a variable choke device will produce conformable patterns. A number of years ago I parted with an almost new scattergun in a big hurry, after I ran some tests with its adjustable choke set at full-choke and discovered the patterns I was getting with 1¼ oz. of No. 6 shot were not only badly short of being 70%, but were also badly blown.

It wasn't the ammunition, because I tried 3 different brands. But rather than being the fault of the choke device, the poor patterns were probably the result of an improper relationship between bore diameter and choke diameter. Had I tried a more open choke setting, the pattern density might have climbed to the full-choke level and with better uniformity as well.

I have since gone back to a variable-choke device on one of my shotguns. And a good example of why it pays to run a series of patterns at different chokes occurred when I was checking out the extra-full choke tube with the high-velocity load carrying 1¼ ozs. of No. 2 shot.



(l.) 75% 12-ga. pattern with 1¼ ozs. of No. 2 shot at 40 yds. from a variable-choke-equipped barrel, extra-full choke tube. In the load, 110 pellets; in the 30″ circle, 82 pellets. Note extremely patchy distribution. (r.) 75% pattern from the ¾-choke tube (improved-modified), same gun and load. Pellets are much more evenly dispersed.

This extra-full choke tube delivered a 75% pattern as it was supposed to, but the pellets were distributed in clumps that left gaping holes. The full-choke tube gave a slightly

(Continued on Page 22)

CRABBING .... and

By Ednard Waldo

THE CRAB POT, similar to those long used by lobster fishermen, is taking hold in the ranks of Louisiana's professional and amateur "crabbers" who are leaning more and more to this latest in the long line of ingenious devices for catching the wily and cantakerous crustacean.

The crab pot is essentially the modification of the traditional lobster pot used for centuries in capturing the northern lobster. It has been used with extreme success on the East Coast where it is standard gear, but has never been employed for any other than experimental use in Louisiana waters. The trap, according to the late Dr. James Nelson Gowanloch, Chief Biologist for the Louisiana Wild Life and Fisheries commission, who introduced it here a decade ago, is one of the most efficient methods that could be used by the recreational crabber and small operator.

The construction of the crab pot is very simple and the materials are relatively inexpensive. It too, has advantages in that little attention is required other than the few minutes needed to take out the crabs and rebait it, although it remains in continuous operation.

Since its casual introduction in an article in the LOUISIANA CONSERVATIONIST the crab pot has become the subject of increasing inquiry by amateur and professional crabbers, hence we are setting forth its specifications.

The crab pot is designed on the basis of normal crab behavior. Crabs are energetic bottom feeders. Once they locate food they are extremely persistent in their activities aimed at reaching that food. Crabs are a lot like finfish in that they may be trapped by a baffles which guide them into a definite enclosure with little possibility of return. The crab pot offers the crabs only two relatively small entrance apertures, but experiments have shown that these are adequate. Once the crabs have passed the funnel and have found that their efforts to close in on the bait are unsuccessful, they follow their normal reaction of rising. Here they encounter at his time a small aperture and emerge into the upper chamber of the trap which is provided with a gabled floor. There they remain unharmed until they are removed.

Bottom side of Male Blue Crab

Top side of Male Blue Crab

Briefly, the crab trap, is cubical in shape, each surface being 24 inches square. The material in the body of the pot is commercial grade, 1½ inch mesh, doubly galvanized, #18 gauge chicken wire. This small mesh is more selective in the size of the crabs taken. The lower funnels, usually one on each side, are made of one-inch mesh for greater stability.

Crabs attracted by the bait, enter the lower chamber, find themselves thwarted in reaching the bait by the wire mesh, move into the upper chamber through the second baffles and cannot escape.

The specifications of construction of the trap are here given since the measurements indicated have been arrived at as the result of long practical experience. The degree of reinforcement of the trap by incorporating a heavy wire frame into the construction of the bottom of the trap or of the whole trap depends upon the load of the catch to be lifted, which in turn depends upon the frequency with which the trap is serviced and the abundance of crabs present.

As has been said, the crab pot is a cube two feet by two feet by two feet (2x2x2), constructed of 1½ inch mesh chicken wire. There are two entrances opposite each other, each at one end of the tentlike internal partition that separates the lower chamber of the pot from the upper chamber. Each entrance is 1½ inches above the base of the trap and measures 11 inches horizontally and 6½ inches vertically. Inside each entrance is a funnel of the same chicken wire 5 inches long and decreasing in size from the 11 x 6½ inch entrance dimensions to an inside funnel exit 5½ x 2½ inches.

The bait compartment, which is attached in the center of the crab pot floor, is a vertical cylinder 4½ inches in diameter,

(Continued on Page 22)

CRABS

By Percy Viosca, Jr.

MANY KINDS of crabs inhabit Louisiana coastal waters, but only three are eaten by human beings, and only one species enters the commercial fishery. The rest are mostly small species which are consumed by creatures of the deep, including each other, for crabs are cannibals of the highest order.

Our common crab is known generally as the "blue crab". In our rich, sub-tropical waters, it is really more greenish than blue. We also have that rare delicacy, the stone crab, whose meaty big claw is strong enough to crush an oyster. This kind is usually boiled and promptly eaten by the oysterman who is lucky enough to catch it in his dredge. The deep sea shrimp fisherman likewise has his choice delicacy, the queen crab. This too is consumed on the fishing grounds and is seldom seen inland except as a museum piece.

The common crab is a very conspicuous species in the Louisiana fishery. We find it everywhere: in the shallow waters on the Gulf, in the tidal bayous, bays, lakes and estuaries. Throughout the warm season, they are often seen in shallow water, but in the winter they stay in deeper water where the temperature is warmer. When the water is very cold, they bury in the mud or sand, or live quiescent on the bottom.

The crab is hatched from an egg about the size of the period at the end of this sentence. As the eggs are laid, they become attached to hair-like filaments which branch from the appendages under the abdomen of the mother, forming a mass which resembles a sponge, hence these mother females are called "sponge crabs". The sponge mass contains upwards of two million eggs. The progeny of six females would be sufficient to stock Lake Pontchartrain with ten pounds of crabs per acre if they all survived to maturity.

The incubation period lasts not over two weeks, varying with temperature. Newborn crabs do not cling to the mother as do young crawfish, but swim off and are dispersed by tidal currents.

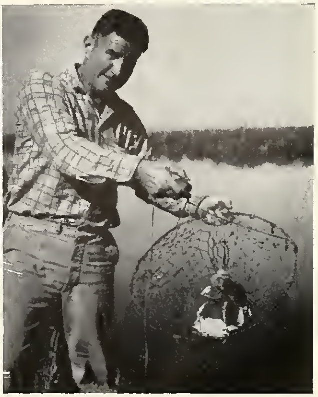
Newly hatched crabs do not remotely resemble their parents. The first form is known as a "zoea", a three syllable word with four letters. Zoeas look more like deformed spiny lobsters than crabs. They swim freely, hunting tiny plants and animals in the open sea. There are several zoea stages, followed by a megalops (large eye) stage. In the megalops stage, the baby crab has changed its shape and resembles a little crawfish with large bulging eyes. Its tail has shortened and its head has widened considerably and it is now one-eighth of an inch long. This stage tires of swimming and hitch hikes on passing jellyfish, seaweed and driftwood. Another transformation takes place and the young crab finally looks somewhat like its parents, although only a quarter of an inch across the widest part of its shell.

Young crabs which have been carried into protected inside waters seem to have a far better chance of survival than those remaining in the open sea. Here they have less competition from other species of crabs and other organisms better adapted to marine life, and their natural enemies are far less numerous.

As with all crustacae, crabs increase in size only at the time of shedding, or casting off, the outer shell to become what is known as a soft shell crab. The flesh and fat have accumulated within the confines of the hard shell until all spaces are filled. The inner side of the old hard shell is gradually dissolved until it becomes very thin and brittle and internal pressure cracks it open along certain pre-determined lines. In this stage, crabs are termed "busters". The soft shell crab emerges from the rear of the buster shell, drawing out its body and legs with slow rhythmic movements.

The newly-emerged soft shell crab inflates itself with water, literally pumping up its flexible covering with hydraulic pressure until it attains the size that it will remain until it is ready for another molt. Its apparent growth is remarkable. For instance a buster crab three and a half inches across the shell will widen to a four and a half inch soft shell crab within a few minutes after it has cast its old shell. As soon as it is physically able, it buries itself in the

(Continued on Page 23)



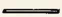
At left the crabber swirls his net through the air into the bayou. Center, he pulls the net to the bank and at right he is rewarded with a fat blue crab. The above scenes will be repeated many times during the spring and summer months near the Louisiana coast.

HOW TO BUILD . . . . IN (FIFTEEN

176″ of 1½″ mesh wire netting, 18 gauge, 24″ wide

18″ of 1″ Mesh Wire Netting, 20 Gauge 24″ Wide,

5 ft. Heavy Flexible Wire


3/16″ Rod Iron (17 ft. For Framework, 1 ft. For Attaching Bait Box To Partition)

Sheet Iron Or Lead Plate

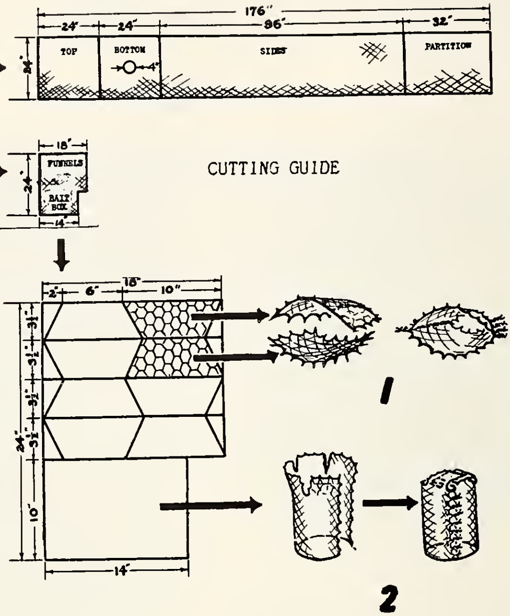
Fish Line, At Least 21 Thread, or No. 18 Wire

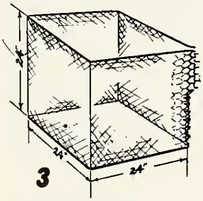
9 Thread Rope

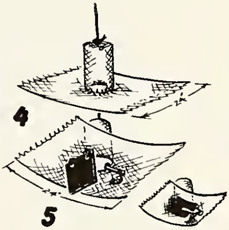
Clothes Pin

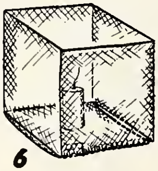
Float

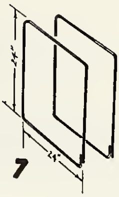
Weight or anchor

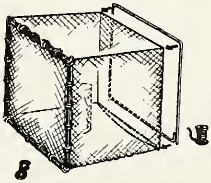


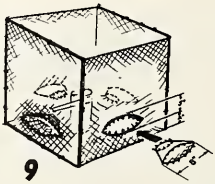


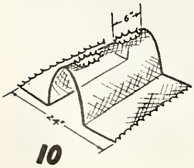


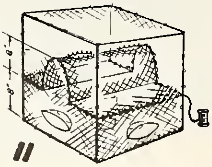


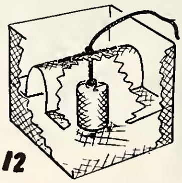












The crab pot represents the latest in a rather long line of ingenious devices for catching crabs, some of which have been patented. Its construction is very simple and the materials are relatively inexpensive. It, too, has advantages in that little attention is required other than the few minutes needed to take out the crabs and rebait it, although it remains in continuous operation. Bait such as menhaden or alewives is readily available, in most cases, from the trap fishermen. Quite often, the pot will catch its own bait and help control predators.

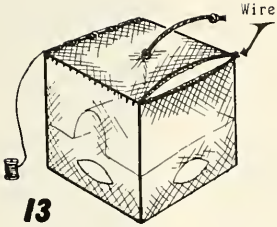
Briefly, it is cubical in shape, each surface being 24 inches square. The material in the body of the pot is commercial grade, 1½ inch mesh, doubly galvanized, no. 18 gauge chicken wire. This size mesh will be more selective in the size of crabs taken. The lower funnels, usually one on each side, are made of 1-inch mesh for greater stability. Pots made of 1-inch mesh throughout will be found effective in catching large eels as well as crabs.

Crabs attracted by the bait, enter the lower chamber, find themselves thwarted in reaching the bait by the wire mesh, move into the upper chamber through a second set of funnels and find it difficult to escape.

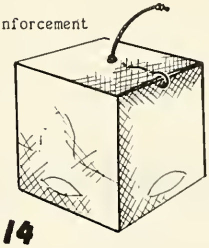
Traps are usually set individually in a long line, or in a series of short lines parallel to each other, about one hundred feet apart, in water varying from one to ten fathoms in depth. Fishing is usually done by a two man crew in a 35-40 foot boat but can be accomplished by one man.

EASY STEPS) . . . . A CRAB POT

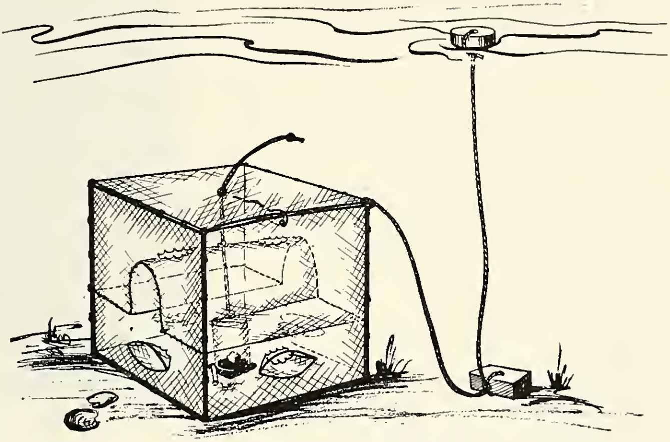
1. Make funnels by twisting together the edges of two pieces of netting along the short edges.
2. Make bait box by rolling strip of netting into a cylinder. Fasten by bending the wires along the vertical seam. Slash the top of the cylinder in three places, to make four tabs at the top, about three inches deep. Bend these down over each other to close the top of the cylinder.
3. Make sides of the pot by bending a piece of netting 24″ x 96″ into a square. Twist the cut edges of the netting together to fasten along the vertical seam.
4. Make bottom of pot from piece of netting 24″ square, with a hole in the center 4″ in diameter. Attach bait box to this hole by twisting the wire together along the junction. Tie 3 ft. of 9 thread rope to the top of the box.
5. Attach 4″ x 4″ plate to the bottom of bait box. Make two wire hinges on one side, and use a clothes pin for the catch on the opposite side. Tie clothes pin to the netting, leaving enough play to let it slip over edge of plate.
6. Attach bottom section to the sides by twisting the netting together along the two cut edges with projecting prongs.
7. Bend 3/16″ rod iron into two squares, 24″ to a side.
8. Lash these iron squares to two opposite sides of the pot. Use either wire or fishline. At the same time, catch in the unattached sides of the bottom section, so that it is now securely attached to the sides.
9. Cut four holes, one on each side, 2″ from the bottom. These should be 8″ wide and 5″ high in size and shape. Attach funnels, small end in, by twisting cut edges of wire together.
10. Make partition by bending piece of netting 32″ into an arch, giving a final outside dimension of 24″ x 24″. Cut two slits in the top of the arch, 6″ long, and bend the wires back and up.
11. Insert partition. The lowest part should be about 8″ from the floor of the pot. Attach by bending wires on cut sides, and lashing with wire or fishline along the straight edges of the netting.
12. Bring rope from bait box up through partition, and tie to an 8″ piece of rod iron which is then woven into the mesh at the top of the arch.
13. Attach top, a piece of netting 24″ square, to the sides on three sides, bending the wires together on two of them, and lashing with wire or fishline on the other. Leave one side open, choosing a side of the top piece which has straight edge. Reinforce the edges of this opening with a piece of heavy, flexible wire, weaving it into the mesh across the edge of the top, and back along the upper edge of the side. Tie rope from bait box to center of top, and tie another knot at the end of the rope. This serves as a handle.
14. Make a catch from a 10″ piece of heavy, flexible wire. Twist one end around the mesh on the side, and weave the rest into the mesh of the top.
15. The finished crab pot, in position, requires the addition of a rope, tied to the corner, and attached first to a weight, and then to a float.



13



14



15

Hunting Season Successful!

By W. C. Goins

A good dog is a must for woodcock.

IS HUNTER SUCCESS on the decline in the State of Louisiana? Is game now in shorter supply than in recent years? Is the game that we do have more difficult to bag? The answer is "no", to all three of the above questions according to recently compiled reports from the district game biologists of the Louisiana Wild Life and Fisheries commission.

The overall picture shows that, with the exception of waterfowl, Louisiana hunters enjoyed more success during the 1957-58 hunting season than had been their pleasure in several years. While in some areas of the state the hunting of certain species was poor as compared to previous seasons, other areas reported good hunting on the same species. To arrive at a clearer or more definite understanding of the situation it would probably be best to view the picture on an area basis rather than the entire state at one time.

Beginning with District One which includes the parishes of Caddo, Bossier, Webster, Claiborne, DeSoto, Red River and Bienville, the results were good on all species except the ducks, geese and woodcock.

John L. Haygood, district biologist assigned to that area reports that squirrel hunting was good but not excellent. He further stated that it might be expressed as "somewhere near average." The dove shooting in his district was described as excellent during the first half of the split esason. Quail hunting showed improvement over last season and the rabbit population was termed "excellent" although few hunters took advantage of the additional rabbit hunting opportunities.

The deer hunting in District One created quite a bit of interest. In Claiborne parish alone, a total of 21 bucks were harvested by the hunters. Caddo parish enjoyed its first deer season, although of somewhat short duration and restricted to "still hunting" or without the use of dogs, in a very long time. A total of 40 bucks were taken in Caddo and apparently the deer were in good condition. One buck taken during the season sported a rack with 20 points.

From District Two which is under the supervision of Joe L. Herring and is made up of the parishes of Lincoln, Union, Morehouse, East Carroll, West Carroll, Richland, Ouachita and Jackson, the news was somewhat encouraging. From hunter bag checks as well as personal contact with sportsmen, Herring reports the hunter-success on squirrels much improved over the 1956-57 season. The situation as to doves was not too desirable during the first half of the split season. Herring stated that this "was probably due to high water (no isolated waterholes) and the late maturing of goatweed and other annuals." He further stated that the last half of the season—November 27 through January 10—was better than the same period of last season from the standpoint of hunter-success.

The quail season in seven out of the eight parishes in District Two was somewhat better. The condition in East Carroll parish was reported to be about the same as last season. Herring pointed out that, although late in maturing, the yield of the food producing annuals was much better in 1957 than the previous three years. This situation, no doubt, had much to do with the success of the late hatches of quail.

The take of deer this past season in District Two indicated an upward trend. While some of the hunters in the area disagreed on this, a check at some of the hunting camps showed a considerable increase in the kill over that of last season. Thirty-six deer checked at the Possum Point club were aged by game biologists as follows: 30—1½ years; five—2½ years; and one—3½ years; none older.

In reporting on snipe and woodcock, Herring stated that he had observed much evidence that would point out more of each species in his district this past season but that few hunters were taking advantage of these opportunities.

In District Three which includes the parishes of Sabine, Natchitoches, Winn, Grant, Rapides, and Vernon, Clyde E. Harrison, supervisor, reports some hunting good and some only fair. For the most part he agreed that taking his district as a whole the hunting seasons were fairly satisfactory. Squirrel hunters had poor to fair success and the dove hunters fared about the same with the last half of this season showing considerable improvement, as far as hunter-success was concerned, over the first part.

The deer season in District Three was quoted as "being on a par with previous years." In the areas concerned, this is construed to mean *good* deer hunting. Harrison stated that the rabbit hunters were well pleased with the rabbit populations. He said that the woodcock populations were only fair this year.

From District Three two other reports have been made. The first is from Robert E. Murry who is Study Leader for Quail Investigations. Murry says "it is too early to give an accurate report on the results of the current season but with the contacts I have been able to make it seems to have been a very good quail year to date in the western part of the state. Southwest and West Central Louisiana do have a better quail crop, without doubt, than in 1956-57."

Assigned to parts of the same district for the purpose of acorn mast and timber stand improvement study is Jack O. Collins, study leader. Collins pointed out that his observations were made on the areas with which he was most familiar. His opinions applied to Central Louisiana unless otherwise specified.

Collins reported that the squirrel hunting was poor and was below par when compared to previous seasons. His reason for this decline in squirrel populations was that, for the past two years, the mast yield had been very low. Rabbits, on the other hand, were plentiful. Collins did state, however, that due to floods in some areas, the hunters reported very poor success. He further said that this situation seemed to be localized.

In summing up the deer season, Collins reported that in Winn and Grant parishes (excluding the game management area) the hunting was fairly good but he did not believe the season was as good as the 1956-57 season. His report on Rapides parish, where a five-day season was held, showed a total kill of over 50 bucks.

District Four is composed of the following parishes: Madison, Tensas, Concordia, Franklin, La Salle, Catahoula and Caldwell. The District Supervisor, Dewey W. Wills, reported the deer hunting good in the parishes of Madison and Tensas. In Concordia, however, too much water in the woods during the open season prevented many of the hunters from reaching the areas in which the deer were to be found. Wills said the same condition severely affected hunting for rabbits and squirrels which were fairly plentiful in those areas. The dove hunting during both parts of the split season was very good in the district. Quail hunting was spotty but the overall season could be termed as fair.

One interesting part of Wills' report had to do with the duck situation. He stated that the small lakes were "out of their banks". The areas that had formerly harbored mallards, saw more lesser scaup this season and this species made up about 80% of each bag. Duck hunting in his district as a whole, however, he classed as very poor.

In charge of District Five which is made up of Beauregard, Allen, Evangeline, Calcasieu, Cameron, Jefferson Davis, Acadia and Vermilion parishes is Jack Sims, District Supervisor. In his report Sims pointed out that all the marsh ridge hunting in Southwest Louisiana was virtually destroyed due to a hurricane that bore the name of Audrey. He, too, said high water conditions during the open seasons limited the kill of swamp rabbits that, from all indications, were fairly plentiful.

Located in District Five is the area that saw some of the larger duck concentrations during the season. Sims said, however, the high water conditions created too many large open water areas for the hunters to enjoy much shooting.

The squirrel hunting in Sims' district was termed fair, or at least equal, to the success enjoyed by the hunters last year. Hunters in this area started out early in the season

Trained Beagles after a Rabbit hunt.

Bird dogs enjoy hunting the Quail.

using squirrel dogs. Sims said the first half of the dove season was good but during the last half the doves could be found only in the rice section and these left soon after the shooting began. As for woodcock, Sims said quite a few were taken and reports from the hunters indicate woodcock populations about the same as last year.

In the western parts of Beauregard and Calcasieu parishes the deer hunting was good. High water actually aided the hunters in this area as it moved the deer to more accessible hunting areas. The six-day deer season in Allen, Evangeline and the east half of Beauregard saw some good hunting also.

J. B. Kidd, Supervisor, District Six, which includes the parishes of Avoyelles, Pointe Coupee, St. Landry, West Baton Rouge, Iberville, Lafayette and St. Martin, gave an account of the overall squirrel situation. He reports that hunter success for the season just past ran very close to that of the previous year. Seven hundred and fifty-nine (759) hunters checked in the field took 1,297 squirrels for an average take per hunter of 1.7 squirrels. The figure shows only a slight increase over the average of last season.

Kidd's report contained an item that may be worthy of consideration. The statement is as follows: "It is believed that hunter success may have been better had not the squirrels already resorted to ground feeding when the season opened. This problem can be eliminated by opening the season on the first of October which will insure the still hunter a greater harvest of squirrels. Five years of research indicate that there is no biological reason why the squirrel season cannot be opened on the first of October."

> *(Editor's note: Under presently existing laws, the Louisiana Legislature sets the earliest dates on which the hunting season on squirrels may be opened. The earliest date at this time is October 15.)*

On the squirrel season Kidd's report included information on the hunts conducted on eight of the game management areas. His figures show 4,851 hunts accounted for 8,740 squirrels or an average of almost two squirrels per hunter. The actual average was 1.8 squirrels per man.

Kidd termed the dove hunting in his district good and compared the deer hunting favorably with previous years despite the high water conditions in many areas. Rabbit hunting in District Six was said to be very poor according to available reports. Kidd also mentioned goodly numbers of snipe and woodcock in his area but had no hunting reports on either species.

The result of a good planned hunt.

A boy and his limit of Doves.

Comprising District Seven are the following parishes: West Feliciana, East Feliciana, St. Helena, Tangipahoa, Washington, St. Tammany, Livingston, Ascension, and East Baton Rouge. In charge of operations here is Kenneth Smith, District Supervisor. Smith reports that for the first few days at the beginning of each half of the split season the dove shooting was fair. Birds in shootable numbers were almost impossible to find during the last weeks of the season. In areas where a fair concentration of birds were to be found, hunting pressure moved them after a day or two of shooting.

As to the quail situation, Smith stated that the reports were in conflict. He went on to say, however, that weather conditions were favorable to good quail populations during the spring, summer and fall preceding the hunting season. Smith added that sufficient rain during the spring and summer and a late hatch pointed to improved quail hunting.

In his report on the squirrel hunting this category was substantially decreased. He indicated that a poor mast crop preceding the season was the major contributing factor. The same mast condition prevailed during this past fall and Smith said the hunters complained about the squirrels feeding on the ground much earlier than usual.

The deer hunting was said by Smith to be classed as good, generally speaking. As to the rabbits, he stated that hunter success was rather spotty and all indications seemed to point to a slightly below normal kill. A report on the spring turkey hunt, a part of which area will be in Smith's district, March 29 through April 2 inclusive, will be given at a later date.

District Eight is supervised by Bob Beter and is made up of all or portions of the following parishes: St. Bernard, Assumption, Plaquemines, Jefferson, Orleans, St. John the Baptist, St. Charles, St. James, Lafourche, Terrebonne, St. Mary, and Iberia. Quite a bit of this district is marshland and naturally, upland game in those areas cannot be expected to be very prevalent. Some areas, however, did present some fair hunting for squirrels.

Beter reported that both woodcock and rabbits were plentiful in his district but very few hunters went out for them. His information did not include too many reports on quail although a few of them pointed toward a good season.

Much of the area in District Eight saw high water conditions during the hunting season. This acted as a deterrent to what would have otherwise been a very successful season for the hunters. Beter stated that snipe were plentiful as were deer in some areas but again, the high water prevented the hunters from reaching those areas.

As for doves, Beter pointed out that fair hunting was the rule during the last half. The first half, he said, was poor.

During the hunting seasons just past, hunter bag checks for squirrels were made in many different areas of the state. A report covering these checks showed work done in 14 parishes and in eight game management areas. The total of hunters checked *inside* management areas stood at 4,851 with 8,740 squirrels bagged. Those checked *outside* management areas totaled 759 hunters who bagged 1,297 squirrels.

Five-day deer hunts, or until a total of 100 bucks were taken, were held on three of the game management areas. On Red Dirt, which is in Natchitoches parish, 86 deer were taken in the five-day period. The number of hunters using the area was 2,765. Of the 86 deer taken, 11 (12.8%) were in the 1½ year age group and 18 (20.9%) in the 2½ year age group. The remaining 57 (66.3%) ranged in age from 3½ to 13½ years.

Flushing a bird in North Louisiana.

The Bushytail presents an elusive object.

On the Catahoula Game Management area, 1301 hunters competed for a total take of 26 bucks. It should be pointed out, however, that the terrain on this area does not lend itself to "still" hunting or, without the use of dogs, as well as Red Dirt. It should also be pointed out that hunting with dogs on management areas where deer are stocked is not a desirable practice.

The deer taken on Catahoula, with the exception of one, were aged. Eight (32%) were in the 3½ year age group and seven (28%) in the 2½ year age group and five (28%) in the 1½ year group. Two each were in the 4½ and 5½ year group and one in the 7½ year age group.

On the Evangeline Game Management area the hunting was limited to archers or bow and arrow hunters. This was the first time the archers of the state had ever been granted a special season or a special place to hunt where they would not have to compete against rifle or shotgun hunters. Although the 180 archers taking advantage of this opportunity during the seven-day hunt took no deer, all were said to have enjoyed the opportunity immensely.

In summing up, it may be said that the 1957-58 hunting seasons with the exception of migratory waterfowl, were fairly good in Louisiana. With the continuous increase in the ranks of Louisiana hunters and the constant inroads being made into the wildlife habitat areas of the state, the game management personnel of the Louisiana Wild Life and Fisheries commission are finding themselves hard pressed to provide hunting opportunities for all. So it should be clearly evident that wildlife conservation must be applied by the hunters as well as technical personnel. Wildlife conservation is a subject that must be practiced as well as preached.

Wildlife Management Stirs Bitter Battles

by Dion Henderson

THERE ARE MORE wildlife management problems indoors than there are outdoors these days.

The flannel-suited members of the ecological community figure in more unusual behavior patterns and mysterious conflicts than the furred and feathered fellows.

What's the inside story of the outdoors controversies that are bursting suddenly into bitter quarrels in state after state?

Quarrels with results like these: The careers of appointed policy makers right up to the level of cabinet teeter under the withering criticisms of professional subordinates . . . .

Ambitions for elective office, including that of a state governor and the office of U. S. senator wither—with allegations of mismanagement of outdoor resources freely quoted as a factor . . . .

Professional administrators on state levels repeat urgent demands for more revenue, explaining that greatly increased funds are needed to maintain fish and game programs even on current inadequate levels. And in the next breath admit that a major portion of the present revenues are being wasted on useless projects; to quote a favorite phrase, "poured down the rathole of public relations."

The inside story on this erupting battle is no simple narrative, with lines clearly drawn. A hint of the complications can be seen in the professional group at the heart of it.

The wildlife management experts, who collectively operate a multibillion dollar recreational industry for some 25,000,000 Americans annually, are dedicated to the proposition that recreational benefits are largely secondary—a bonus for proper management of soil and water and forest resources.

And in fighting for the larger concept, the ecologist is a little like the fellow who had charge of the fancy restaurant: to keep the place in business he has to fight off people who want to kill a whole elephant just to make one eelphant sandwich.

Widespread misunderstandings of programs, methods and even purposes have handicapped wildlife administration almost from the time the nation's first chair in the science of game management was established at the University of Wisconsin in 1933 for Aldo Leopold.

The new ecological scientists were gathered together in "conservation" departments, a term that became a misnomer about the time the science was born, for its cardinal principle involved production of fish and game as a crop to be harvested like any other crop, in contrast to non-renewing mineral resources.

In 24 years, research technicians—operating in a field where nearly every native American since Dan'l Boone considered himself an authority—have not let a year pass without telling their fellow citizens a number of things their fellow citizens were unhappy to be told, and frequently unwilling to be shown.

This applied not only to hunters and fishermen, who traditionally know a great many things that aren't true, but also farmers and agricultural specialists, industrialists from lumbermen to cheesemakers, engineers, ranchers and practically everyone else with a stake or an interest in the world of nature.

That didn't leave out many people.

Eventually, the ecologist and the agronomist may agree that there is no need for a collision of interest in their basic aims. Each can subscribe to wildlife philosopher Durward Allen's dictim that "the husbandry of land in natural units, each for what it can do, for what it is worth in perpetuity, is the way to maintain the earth as a wholesome habitat for man."

The task of producing more and more game for more and more hunters becomes a staggering assignment.

Lands that will not grow forests or game cover won't grow corn; rivers dried to dusty gullies will no more irrigate crops than they will nourish fish. But fitting the little pictures of specific use into the big picture of land and water management comes slow, and cooperative agreements, among users of the land have scarcely begun to emerge in any workable pattern.

Meanwhile the task of producing more and more fish and game for more and more hunters and fishermen, on less and less suitable acreage becomes a staggering assignment. Millions of hunters and fishermen have been unable to keep up with the bewildering advances of game management. Instead of supporting new techniques, they brood.

Ernest E. Swift, executive director of the National Wildlife Federation and like Allen a former top-ranking administrator, puts it this way:

"The rank and file of the American people do not have the basic understanding of the conservation problems which are facing them."

And for this lack of understanding that extends even to those who should be his most militant friends, the wildlife professional must bear a substantial part of the responsibility himself. He has learned many wonders of the world during the past two decades, but he is in trouble now because that time he did not learn how to share his knowledge with the people who pay the bills.

ALL KINDS OF WHALE MEAT EDIBLE

The meat of all species of whales is edible, although some claim that the meat of sperm and bottlenose whales is unpalatable. Both are used as food by the Japanese, however.

Whale meat resembles beef chemically but it has less fat and contains more amino acids. Fishiness and oiliness possibly due to staleness may be objectionable characteristics, otherwise the meat tastes like coarse beef, veal, pork, or venison.

Wham Brake

Wham Brake, located in Ouachita and Morehouse parishes, furnished many a limit of waterfowl during the season just ended. In the upper right photo, are: Bill Simpson, Mrs. Milton Butler and Milton Butler with eleven mallards and one pintail.

James Neal and R. R. Procell, above, with their limits of greenheads killed in Wham Brake.

Dick Thompson and Jim Neil with six mallards and two pintails killed in Wham Brake.

Shelby Smith, G. A. Evans, and Clarence Evans, each with limit of big mallards killed in Wham Brake near Monroe.

(Photos by Joe L. Herring)

FOR WOOD DUCKS ONLY

Wildlife Students Erect Aluminum Duck Houses

Game students erect aluminum huts.

GAME MANAGEMENT students in Louisiana State University's School of Forestry are conducting a comparative study of the effectiveness of wood and aluminum boxes as nesting facilities for wood ducks.

The use of wood boxes has already been employed with considerable success in certain areas of the country, but the LSU students are the first to use aluminum containers. Professor Leslie L. Glasgow, heading the course in "Game Techniques," said aluminum structures are less expensive than the others, and if they are equally effective, an expanded

Class of game management students oar into bank preparatory to wood duck assignment.

program of providing nesting facilities could result.

Louisiana game laws restrict hunters to one wood duck a day, because of the limited number, Professor Glasgow said. The lack of nesting places is believed to be one of the major reasons for the small population.

The young LSU foresters recently distributed 25 aluminum and wooden structures in a swamp near Washington in St. Landry Parish. They placed the boxes in trees, where wood ducks naturally nest. Fifteen will be added in the near future.

The structures have openings large enough for the ducks to enter, but too small for possums or coons to claim the boxes for habitations.

Nesting material, consisting of wood shavings, is placed in the bottom of the containers. The aluminum boxes, cylindrical in shape, are 28 inches long and a foot in diameter. They have a galvanized screen leading from the floor to the opening to enable baby ducks to climb out the day after hatching.

Rarely do other animals occupy the boxes, though bees, mice and squirrels have been known to inhabit them, Professor Glasgow said.

The ducks begin nesting in February, and each female lays from 10 to 12 eggs. The eggs usually hatch in March or April.

The students will make inspection tours in February and March to compare the effectiveness of the two types of boxes. If over 50 per cent of each type is used by the ducks, Professor Glasgow said, the project will be considered worthwhile.

Wood ducks normally make their homes in holes of trees and occasionally in rock cavities. If an area is lacking in these natural facilities, the ducks will travel until they find a place. Often they are forced to settle in an area having poor nesting places which limit-reproduction.

Some of the wood houses made for wood duck homes.

An extensive distribution of nesting boxes should increase the number of ducks for Louisiana sportsmen, Professor Glasgow said. Once a duck has found a good nesting place he will usually return the following season. Ducks also have a tendency to return to the area of their birth.

The Louisiana Wild Life and Fisheries Commission already has wooden structures in five locations in north and central Louisiana that have attracted ducks.

The Louisiana Wild Life and Fisheries commission held their January meeting in Monroe. "This meeting," said chairman E. R. McDonald, "gave us an opportunity to meet with and discuss some of the problems of the hunters and fishermen of northeast Louisiana." At the desk are, left to right, Raliegh J. Pitre, Cutt Off, Commissioner; George A. Foster, Pollock, vice chairman; John Cutrone, Morgan City, Commissioner; Ray Whatley, Alexandria, Commissioner; F. Lamar Clement, director of the commission; E. R. McDonald, Newellton, Chairman; Miss Magda Cire, secretary to the director; and Warren Simon, attorney for the commission.

CHOKE TALK

(Continued from Page 9)

less dense spread of shot that was equally irregular. The improved-modified or ¾-choke tube, however, which gave a 65% pattern with 1¼ ozs. of No. 6 shot, and a modified or 60% pattern with 7½'s, handled the same charge of 2's for a fairly evenly distributed 75%, with one pattern going as high as 80%. Incidentally, this variable-choke-equipped gun has an actual barrel length of only 23″.

The standard patterning range is 40 yards. The usual procedure is to fire at a 40″ or 48″ square of paper which has a small bullseye in the center. The bull will show the shooter whether the gun is shooting where it is pointed, or whether it is centering the shot charge high or low. A 30″ circle is drawn around that part of the pattern containing the most pellet hits. The hits are then counted and the percentage of shot pellets contained in the load. The quickest and easiest way to count pellet hits is to break the pattern down to 4 pie-shaped areas of roughly equal size; circle each hit with a pencil mark as it is counted and jot down the total by sections. To obtain a reliable check, at least 5 patterns should be made and the average taken.

However, as a rule the hunter is more interested in pattening his shotgun at the range at which he usually kills his game, and this is a very wise practice. Using a shot size geared to the size of the bird, what he should strive for is a pattern of evenly distributed pellets at least 30″ wide. Density should be high enough to kill cleanly, not so high that the bird is unnecessarily mutilated, nor so low that a cripple results.

A kill is possible from a single pellet striking the bird in the head, but we cannot bank on that. Body hits are what must be considered. The load and choke that will insure 4 or 5 hits with shot pellets of the proper size is the combination that will consistently put game in the bag.

The smart shotgunner knows it is the pattern that counts. And he also knows the powder burned on the patterning range represents time and money well spent.

Reprinted from *American Rifleman.*

PELICAN LIMERICK

(Continued from Page 7)

it). After exhausting the limerick in England, he started a new chapter with the statement, 'The best limericks have been written in America. The late Dixon Merritt. . . and going on with the story of the Pelican.

This gave me the opportunity to say that I had always known the damned thing would kill me, and now it had. But my managing editor (I was on the Outlook Magazine in New York at the time) wrote the author that he had better resurrect Dixon Merritt pretty middling quick, because he was needed on the job.

"Louis Utermeyer gave it pretty extensive treatment in his anthology of American humor. I can't remember the title of that book, either—my copy suffered the same fate as the other one. The latest extensive treatment that I know of was an article by Clifton Fadiman in the October 1955 issue of Holiday."

That's the essence of Mr. Merritt's letter, but there's much more to be said for Mr. Merritt himself.

"Who's Who" reveals that he has had a long and useful career in journalism, education, public service; that he has been an ornithologist of note (that may have something to do with his creation of the Pelican) and that he is the author of several books.

His work on the Nashville Banner included staff correspondent, editorial writer and associate editor. He was also editor of the Nashville Tennessean.

During the first World War, Merritt worked in the office of the assistant secretary of agriculture in Washington, and was editor of the agency's Office of Information, and chief of its press service.

From 1933 to 1937 he served as Tennessee's director of public safety, and later was a professor of journalism at Cumberland University, Williamsburg, Ky.

He was president of the American Press Humorists in 1916-17, and founder of the Tennessee Ornithological Society. His published books include "Audubon in Kentucky", "History of Tennessee," "The Department of Agriculture in War" and numerous monographs, poems and sketches.

Certainly his has been an eventful and productive career. But human nature being what it is, Dixon Lanier Merritt will probably be the longest and best remembered for his non-sensical little limerick that tells of the pelican and his wonderous beak.

CRABBING

(Continued from Page 10)

5¼ inches high and having a rounded top. Access to the bait compartment is afforded by cutting a wire flap in the floor of the pot, which serves as an easily closed door. The internal partition of the pot follows the form of a gabled tent. It is attached to the pot walls 6 inches from the base of the pot, then forms a horizontal 4½ inch shelf from which it proceeds at an angle of 45, 15½ inches on each side, but the two sides do not meet at an angle but meet in such a manner that they form a cut-off 1 inch wide forming a horizontal crest. This crest carries the exit into the upper pot chamber. This exit, which is centrally placed, measures 8 inches longitudinally and 3 inches laterally, thus leaving on each side of it a closed flat 8 inch section of crest. Through this aperture, the crabs pass into the holding chamber.

Access to the pot is provided by a simple construction whereby one of the lateral edges of the trap, an edge parallel to the axis of the internal partition, is not fastened but is finished off so that it can be pressed aside and provide for the removal of the catch. The pots must be provided with necessary line and cork buoys so that they may be readily recovered. The lifting line can be attached singly (or as is usually necessary) bridled to the corners of the pot to prevent damage when the weight of the catch is such that the structure would otherwise be distorted.

BEHOLD THE FISHERMAN

(Continued from Page 5)

strikes but one? And as for Canasta, the less said, the better.

No, my little wood burning friend, acrid smoke has gone to your head. Why don't you, instead, try burning "for rent" signs on hollow trees for all your squirrely friends.

The other half of this verbal filet concerns the question of veracity. It is true that, upon occasion and with justification, a few fishermen have lied. It is not true, however, that the truth is not in us.

Is there any doubt in the case history No. 1? As a boy this person was suspected of chopping down a cherry tree. When questioned and though confronted with an impending trip to the wood shed, No. 1 accepted his responsibility by answering the charge, "Yes, I did it with my little hatchet."

Now I ask you, could anyone be more truthful? What has never been disclosed was the next question his father asked him. "Why did you chop down the tree?"

"To get a fishing pole," was the little fellow's answer. The old man explained that cherry wasn't too good for fishing poles. He then cut down two prize maples and they spent the summer together, down at the old catfish hole.

There is also a case on record whereby a fisherman was actually encouraged to lie. A local chapter of the Liar's Club offered a spinning outfit as first prize to the biggest liar.

CRABS

(Continued from Page 11)

mud behind its old empty shell for protection against natural enemies, and even its own brothers and sisters. The soft shell crab cannot feed, but gets its energy from its stored up fat reserve.

Within a few hours, the soft shell begins to toughen, and such a crab is known as a "papershell". After twenty-four hours the shell is leathery and the creature is called a "buckram" crab. After two or three days, the crab is hard again, but since it has used up its fat reserve it is called a "skinny" crab. It is now ravenously hungry and starts feeding again.

Each crab goes through some fifteen molts before attaining the mature, or adult form, which can shed no more. An adult male is usually about eight inches across the shell, measured from point to point, the female slightly smaller. The farther from the sea they are taken, the greater the proportion of males to females, until only males are taken. Adult males which wander into fresh water may be nearly a foot across, and 21 inches with the claws stretched apart. It has not been determined whether chemical nutrients in the strange environment, or lack of a mate is responsible for the extraordinary size of these monster male "freshwater" crabs.

In warm weather, crabs shed their shells frequently and, if food is plentiful, can mature in about six months. A crab hatched in March may be full grown by the end of summer, but one hatched in September will not attain full size until the following summer because winter will intervene and slow down its rate of growth.

The popular belief that the moon affects the molting of crabs apparently has no foundation, but tidal movements caused by the moon do affect their daily life. Buster crabs frequently come inshore with the rise of the tide to protect themselves from natural enemies. When the tide ebbs, the defenseless soft-shells are sometimes stranded in shallow water and can be captured more readily by human beings. The higher the tidal range, the greater will be the number of stranded soft shell crabs, and so to some extent, at least, their harvest would be indirectly affected by the moon. The commercial harvest of crabs taken in the hard shell stage and kept in floats until soft is not affected by tidal changes.

A crab caught by a claw or leg has the power to sacrifice the member to save its life. A valve-like arrangement in the joint prevents bleeding, and the lost limb may be regenerated during subsequent moltings. On an immature crab, the new limb will grow to normal size in about three molts, but an adult crab cannot renew its limbs because it has lost its power to develop a new soft shell.

Each female crab, when about to undergo her final molt, is proposed to by a male and the honeymoon begins. The groom carries his bride around, holding her securely with his six "walking" legs. As only his swimming legs and biting claws are free, it is difficult for him to crawl on bottom, so he moves about mostly by swimming. His hold on his bride is tenacious, and he will generally fight to the death and even permit himself to be drawn out of the water without releasing his grip.

When the bride is ready to cast off her last virgin shell, the groom seeks out a secluded spot and releases his hold, but stands guard close by. The actual marriage occurs while the female is a soft-shell crab, but the husband continues to carry and watch over his spouse until her new shell has hardened and she is once more able to defend and feed herself.

It is not known whether a male crab can take a second or third wife. At any rate, after the mating season, weakened and dead male crabs are frequently found along the shores and beaches. After marriage, the female crabs, wherever they may be, start on a long journey back to the sea where they were born, just the opposite of the salmon migration. These mother crabs spend the remainder of their days in the shallow waters of the Gulf and nearby coastal waters until all of the eggs in their bodies have been matured, laid and hatched into little zoeas. After separation from their mates, female crabs never remarry, yet are capable of laying fertile eggs for the rest of their natural lives.

Crabs exhibit two types of locomotion: swimming and crawling. Swimming is accomplished by means of the two, flat, oarlike rear legs, such movements being sidewise either to the right or left, with frequent alternation. The swimming movement is ordinarily slow, but a pursued crab can streamline itself by folding up one set of legs and stretching out the other set and dart through the water with unbelievable speed. Crawling is accomplished by means of the three pairs of "walking legs". This motion is also generally sideways, in a zigzag path, but for short distances a crab may move forward or backward.

The pincer claws are used for capturing and holding food, for defense against natural enemies, and for biting inexperienced crabbers. Crabs frequently bury in the bottom with only eyes and feeders exposed. Thus hidden, they can escape their enemies, or lie in ambush for unsuspecting prey or for the toe of an unwary bather.

The food of the crab is of great variety, both animal and vegetable. Although pre-eminently a scavenger, a crab can seek and capture live food. It is capable of opening an oyster, which it goes about in a manner which bespeaks of experience, but fortunately most crabs confine their depredations to small oysters which are usually too abundant for their own good. Crabs prefer mussels and other sessile organisms to oysters, however, perhaps because they are easier to crush. Thus, crabs may do more good than harm to oyster reefs by destroying the shell pests which would otherwise crowd the oysters for living space and steal their food.

In tidal lakes, like Pontchartrain and Salvador, crabs feed to a large extent on the young of the brackish water clam, the same species whose shells are so widely used for road building. Crabs also prey on small fish. Although they do not practice birth control they can prevent over-population of their kind by cannibalism. A wounded crab will be set upon and torn to pieces, and soft shell crabs are sought out and devoured. The cast sheds of buster crabs are apparently eaten as matter of calcium conservation.

Although the blue crab is the only species utilized in the markets and crab meat factories in the Gulf coastal area, many other kinds of native crabs serve useful purposes. Mud crabs and oyster crabs are dainty morsels for redfish, sea trout, croakers, drumfish, sheepshead and other fishes. Fiddler crabs are eaten by fish, raccoons, terrapin and waterfowl. They keep the salt marshes clean by devouring animal and vegetable debris and thus reduce mosquito breeding. They also eat the wigglers themselves. In deep water off the coast, many kinds of crabs are eagerly sought as food by red snappers, jewfish, and other inhabitants of the reefs and open sea. The cobia, or lemon fish, feeds frequently on crabs and is sometimes known as the "crab eater".

FRESH WATER FISHING

(Continued from Page 4)

stocked in Louisiana waters during the past year. Nine hundred thousand of these were obtained from the federal hatchery at Natchitoches. The fish were stocked at Iatt Lake, Old River Lake in Beauregard Parish, Sam Houston State Park Lake, Swan Lake, Cross Lake, Whiskey Chitto, Black Lake, Joe's Bayou, Six Mile Lake, Fort Buhlow Lake, Cocodrie Lake near Forest Hill, Concordia Lake, Tew Lake, Lake St. John, Jones Bayou, Twin Lakes, Bayou Louis and Grassy Lake.

The fishery biologists are always ready to talk and conduct discussions. This is evidenced by seventy talks given to civic groups including Rotary clubs, sportsmen's clubs, school clubs, scouts and others last year. An invitation to address any group of people or club on fishery topics is always welcome.

LOUISIANA WILDLIFE FEDERATION

ANNUAL CONVENTION

The 19th annual convention of the Louisiana Wildlife Federation will be held in the Captain Shreve Hotel in Shreveport on February 14-16th. Featured speaker for the meeting will be Lt. Governor Lether E. Frazar.

Other prominent authorities appearing on the program are: Chairman E. R. McDonald and Director Lamar Clement of the Louisiana Wild Life and Fisheries Commission; A. B. Jackson, field director of the National Wildlife Federation, Washington, D. C.; and Walter Gresh, director of region 4, U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Atlanta, Georgia.

The theme of this 19th annual meeting is "Our Disappearing Habitat". A symposium will be staged with six speakers featured on the panel discussing the topic "Habitat, The Key To Continued Hunting and Fishing". The panel members and their topics are as follows: "Wetlands", Ted Ford, Office Chief, Fish and Game Division, La. Wild Life and Fisheries Commission; "Forest and Timberlands", Raymond D. Moody, Wildlife Biologist, International Paper Company, Mobile, Alabama; "Fresh Water Areas", Harry E. Schafer, Jr., Fishery Supervisor, La. Wild Life and Fisheries Commission; "Is The Sea Inexhaustible", Percy Viosca, biologist, Oyster, Water Bottoms and Commercial Seafood Division, La. Wild Life and Fisheries Commission; and "Wildlife's Esthetic Values", P. A. Daigre, curator, Museum of Natural Science, Louisiana State University.

Other speakers scheduled to take part in the program are: Herbert Stern, fishery biologist, La. Wild Life and Fisheries Commission; William J. Allen, Field Representative, Wildlife Management Institute, Washington, D. E., and Lloyd F. Abadie, president, Louisiana Wildlife Federation, Inc.

All members of the Federation are extended a most cordial invitation to attend this meeting and are urged to be present and participate in the many sessions that are designed to increase the supply of fish and game in our state thru mutual understanding and cooperation.

The Louisiana Outdoor Writers Association will meet during the three day convention.

FELICIANA SPORTSMEN'S LEAGUE ORGANIZED

Jules Fontenot, 6th District Vice President of the Federation announced recently that the Feliciana Sportsmen's League had been formed. The organizational meeting was held in the St. Francisville Courthouse. Ben Garris was elected President of the Club and stated that "membership in the club was open to any resident of the adjoining parishes and was not limited to outdoorsmen in St. Francisville." Billy Denham was elected 2nd Veep and "Bo" Bryant will serve the club as 1st Vice President. John H. Shipes was elected as Secretary and Joseph Cutrer as Treasurer. In other action the membership voted to accept ladies as members of the club; set the dues at $2 per year; selected the first Wednesday of each month as the regular meeting night and set the fiscal year from January 1 to December 31st. Shipes, the newly elected Secretary predicted that "if we obtain the cooperation from the membership that we are counting on, I believe we can attain a membership of 200 within the next ninety days."

BONNET CARRE ROD AND GUN CLUB NEWS

The winter general meeting of the main club was held recently in the Gym at Norco. Approximately 160 persons attended the meeting. District biologist Robert Beter was the featured speaker. After the general business session the following officers were elected for the coming year: Hubert Schurtz, president; Ben S. Graves, vice president; Walter N. Day, secretary, and G. E. Cleveland, treasurer.

The fresh water fishing section's 1957 bass contest prizes were awarded at its December meeting, where they entertained the local business men who donated the prizes for this contest. Section officers for 1958 were elected as follows: L. E. Owens, chairman; G. C. Lorio, secretarial committeeman; A. A. Hymel, financial committeeman; C. E. Pietz, Eli Haydel, Dan Montz, L. A. Walker, Les Waguespack as committeemen-at-large.

Chairman Al Chauvin of the salt water fishing section announced that the winner of the Lake Pontchartrain speckled trout contest for 1957 was M. N. Champagne with a four pound ten ounce beauty, which topped arch-rival Earl Dawson's best effort by just three ounces. Lucien Dupuy was third with a four pounds even speck.

The bird hunting section was unable to schedule its dove contest this season. According to chairman George Tassin, an upland game bird feed is planned for before too long, at which get-together 1958 officers will be elected.

The duck hunting section enjoyed excellent Dos Gris shooting during the final month of the season. Several fine feeds were held at the LaBranch camp. Chairman Eddie Roussel has announced that banded ducks were killed by Tee Roger, Herb Duhe and Claude Breaux.

RACELAND SPORTSMAN'S CLUB ORGANIZED

At a recent meeting of sportsmen held in Raceland the group organized the Raceland Sportsman's Club. Election of officers for the year was held with the following persons elected: Roland Mayet, president; Wilson Melancon, 1st vice-president; Albert Foret, 2nd vice president; Clayton Folse, secretary and Larry Uzee, treasurer.

The following members were elected to serve on the board of directors: Roy Zeringue, Louis Guidry, Francis Baudoin and Ralph Hebert.

Guest speakers at the meeting were Sheriff Eddie St. Marie of Lafourche Parish, and Lester G. Benoit, president of the Lafourche Sportsman's Club at Thibodaux. Sheriff St. Marie encouraged the members to build a strong organization and stated he would like to see other towns in the parish form such organizations. Sheriff St. Marie promised to work with such clubs in his parish. Benoit described the activities and organization of the Federation and explained the program of the coming convention to be held in Shreveport.

OIL AND GAS LEASING REGULATIONS REWRITTEN

New rules have been proposed by the U. S. Department of the Interior to regulate oil and gas leasing activities on wildlife lands. "The new regulations show the value which we believe ought to be placed on our country's wildlife resources," says Secretary of the Interior Fred A. Seaton.

Four categories of wildlife lands are recognized in the regulations: (1) national wildlife refuges, (2) game ranges under the joint jurisdiction of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Bureau of Land Management, (3) Coordination lands withdrawn by the federal government and assigned to the individual States for wildlife purposes, and (4) Alaska wildlife areas managed by the Service.

ATTENTION

LOUISIANA BAIT DEALERS

The Fisheries Section of the Wild Life and Fisheries Commission is attempting to compile a directory of bait dealers and minnow growers throughout the state. This office frequently receives requests for information pertaining to the location and type of baits handled by such establishments, and a current directory would certainly be advantageous to all concerned.

We are therefore requesting that all bait dealers and minnow growers complete the following questionnaire and return it to us at your earliest convenience. Replies should be directed to Mr. Harry E. Schafer, Jr., Wild Life and Fisheries Commission, 126 Civil Courts Building, New Orleans, Louisiana.

Your cooperation will be greatly appreciated by this office.

NAME:...

ADDRESS:..

PHONE NUMBER:...

(Please check)

( ) Retail Bait Dealer
(Type of bait handled)

- ( ) Minnows, Types..
- ( ) Worms, Types..
- ( ) Shrimp, Types...
- ( ) Others, Types...

( ) Wholesale Bait Dealer
(Type of bait handled)

- ( ) Minnows, Types..
- ( ) Worms, Types..
- ( ) Shrimp, Types...
- ( ) Others, Types...

( ) Minnow Grower

List species of minnows grown...

Crawfish Bisque In The Offing